

Message Text

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20

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15

ACDA-19 IO-14 CPR-02 DRC-01 INT-08 SCEM-02 NEA-10

/148 W

----- 111892

P R 290930Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9717

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

JBEHTP/AMEMBASSY TAIPEI 510

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AHKONSUL MELBOURNE 63

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SINGAPORE 4620

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENRG OVIP (REAGAN, RONALD)

SUBJ: PETROLEUM CUTBACKS

REF: SINGAPORE 4333

SUMMARY

US FUELING PROBLEMS IN SINGAPORE DEVELOPED NEW TWIST
YESTERDAY WHEN SHELL OIL INFORMED EMBASSY THAT IT COULD
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NEITHER PROVIDE JET FUEL FOR AIRCRAFT BEARING

PRESIDENTIAL ENVOYE GOVERNOR REAGAN NOR ANY FUEL FOR MILITARY AIRCRAFT UNDER DFSC CONTRACT. WHILE PROBLEM OF REFUELING REAGAN FLIGHT HAS BEEN RESOLVED, DIFFICULTY GAVE INSIGHT INTO DEGREE TO WHICH GOS MIGHT BE WILLING TO GO TO AVOID FURTHER CRUDE CUTBACKS. END SUMMARY.

1. SHELL OIL WHICH PROVIDES ALL FUEL REQUIREMENTS FOR MILITARY AIRFIELDS IN SINGAPORE TOLD EMBOFF NOV. 28 GOS HAD ADVISED IT THAT ALL AIRCRAFT REFUELED UNDER DFSC CONTRACTS WOULD FALL UNDER FORCE MAJEURE AND COULD NO LONGER BE FUELED IN SINGAPORE.

2. UPON HEARING OF REFUELING PROBLEM, I CALLED MFA PERMSEC BOGAARS AND ASKED FOR CLARIFICATION. BOGAARS ADVISED THAT QUESTION OF REAGAN VISIT AND BROADER ISSUE OF REFUELING FUTURE FLIGHTS OF US MILITARY AIRCRAFT AND SUPPORT FLIGHTS FOR LOCKHEED FACILITY SHOULD BE RAISED WITH FINANCE MINISTRY PERMSEC NGIAM TONG DOW, GOS PETROLEUM COORDINATOR.

3. THIS MORNING NGIAM REITERATED GOS CONCERN WITH BECOMING ANOTHER ROTTERDAM SAYING THAT NOT ONLY SINGAPORE BUT ASEAN PARTNERS TO WHOM SINGAPORE EXPORTED REFINED PETROLEUM PRODUCTS WOULD BE SERIOUSLY AFFECTED IF CRUDE SUPPLIES SUFFICIENTLY REDUCED BY ARABS. GOS HAS ADVISED OIL COMPANIES DO NOT DO A THING THAT MIGHT JEOPARDIZE

SINGAPORE'S NON-ALIGNED STATUS TO WHICH, ACCORDING TO NGIAM, OIL COMPANIES READILY AGREED. WHEN PRESSED ON SPECIFIC REAGAN FLIGHT, NGIAM SAID THIS WOULD COME UNDER GENERAL RESTRICTION ON SALES TO EMBARGOED PARTIES AND HENCE COULD NOT BE SUPPLIED. HE DISPLAYED CONSIDERABLE NERVOUSNESS - PROBABLY WORRYING ABOUT HIS OWN NECK - AND SUGGESTED ONLY THAT WE RAISE MATTER AS POLITICAL ISSUE WITH FOREIGN MINISTRY OR GET ANZUK FORCES TO REFUEL AT TAGAH AIR BASE. HE SAID HIS INSTRUCTIONS WERE CLEAR AND HE HAD NO AUTHORITY TO DEVIATE FROM THEM. FORM ON BROADER QUESTION OF MILITARY AIRCRAFT REFUELING IN SINGAPORE AND SUPPORT OF LOCKHEED FACILITY, NGIAM TOOK STIFF LINE THAT ONLY MILITARY AIRCRAFT OF SINGAPORE, VIETNAM

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AND OTHER COUNTRIES CONSIDERED BY ARABS AS OUTSIDE EMBARGO COULD BE REFUELED IN SINGAPORE. WHEN I POINTED OUT THAT VARIOUS AIRCRAFT SUPPLYING AND USING LOCKHEED FACILITY COULD NOT BE SEPARATED, HE SAID THAT WE MIGHT CONSIDER ARRANGING FOR BILLING THROUGH REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM OR SOME OTHER THIRD PARTY. I POINTED OUT THIS INFEASIBLE SINCE MOST AIRCRAFT INVOLVED WERE US MILITARY.

5. TWO HOURS LATER NGIAM CALLED TO SAY REAGAN PLANE COULD BE REFUELED IF IT DID NOT BEAR MILITARY MARKINGS. IT WOULD BE CONSIDERED A CIVILIAN FLIGHT. MOREOVER SINCE LOCKHEED WAS SINGAPORE COMPANY, PLANES SERVICING FACILITY WOULD BE CONSIDERED ELIGIBLE TO PURCHASE FUEL FROM SINGAPORE REFINERIES. ITINERANT PLANES LANDING TO REFUEL, HOWEVER, (NOW ABOUT 10-15 PER MONZQ) COULD NOT BE REFUELED IN SINGAPORE.

6. MEETING WITH NGIAM WAS CLEAREST INDICATION ENHASSY HAS HAD SO FAR OF DEGREE TO WHICH SINGAPORE MIGHT SUCCUMB TO ARAB PRESSURE AND EXTENT TO WHICH THEY MIGHT GO TO AVOID FURTHER OIL CUTBACKS. NGVEM PROBABLY GOT MINISTERIAL GUIDANCE TO RELAX POSITION ON REAGAN AIRCRAFT. UYELL HAS SINCE CONFIRMED THAT REAGAN PLANE WILL BE REFUELED.

7. EMBASSY PLANS SOUND OUT BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION RE POSSIBILITY US MILITARY AIRCRAFT LANDING AT TENGAH AND USING RAF FUEL SUPPLIES. IN MEANTIME AIRATT HAS ADVISED DOD USERS OF FUEL EMBARGO.

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
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